

What is Advocacy?

Africa is a changing continent with much promise for the future. New systems of government and new organizations are evolving. People have more opportunities than ever before to become involved in the decision-making processes which affect their lives. Although it may not be possible to practice every aspect of advocacy discussed in this guide, the act of advocating itself can open new spaces for participation in the development process.

This training guide aims to present advocacy in a broad sense. Although there are many different ways to conceptualize advocacy, this guide will focus on **advocacy directed at changing the policies, positions or programs of any type of institution**—a small NGO, a council of elders, a ministry of health, a national parliament, an international agency or any other kind of organization.

Policy advocacy is not limited to decisions that are made through open, organized and formal systems of governance. The tools presented in this guide can be applied to situations in which decision-making is informal, adaptive, opaque or even secluded.

Wherever change needs to occur, advocacy has a role to play. Whether you want more funding for a family planning clinic, new programs to address child malnutrition, laws to make primary schooling accessible or increased attention to a health program within your organization, advocacy can help you accomplish your goals.

Objectives

In this module, we will:

- A. explore the **concept of advocacy** as it applies to professionals working in Africa;
- B. discuss which **basic elements of advocacy** we currently use;
- C. consider a **conceptual framework for advocacy**.

A. Concept of Advocacy

The following case study is presented to help you answer the question, “What is Advocacy?”



Case Study

Kenyan Advocates Succeed in Promoting Adolescent Health¹

One in four Kenyans is an adolescent and teens represent an ever-growing proportion of the population. Hospital treatment of teenagers for the consequences of unsafe abortion accounts for

between 20 and 50 percent of all such cases.² Teens aged 15-19 years also constitute approximately 35 percent of all reported HIV/AIDS cases in Kenya.³ Still, the government of Kenya prohibits the distribution of contraceptives to adolescents.

In early 1990, the Center for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) was established to conduct research on adolescent health issues and to advocate for policies that promote the well-being of young people.

¹ Adapted from *After Cairo: A Handbook on Advocacy for Women Leaders*, 1994.

² The Center for the Study of Adolescence, 1995.

³ The Center for the Study of Adolescence, 1995.

CSA encountered opposition to their advocacy efforts early on, but used this opposition to build a stronger and more creative force for adolescent reproductive health. Religious organizations that had attended several conferences on adolescent reproductive health in Kenya opposed CSA's work. They were so effective in their opposition to family life education in schools that the Ministry of Education threatened to eliminate the family life program from the curriculum.

Against this backdrop, youth-serving organizations including CSA decided to develop a coalition to support adolescent reproductive health. In 1994, they established the Kenyan Association for the Promotion of Adolescent Health (KAPAH), conducted advocacy trainings and developed an advocacy strategy. KAPAH developed and distributed fact sheets on adolescent reproductive health which helped to dispel myths and misinformation about adolescent reproductive health and programs such as family life education.

KAPAH also worked closely with the press to educate the public about the true content of family life education programs and the extent of reproductive health problems facing Kenya's youth. In fact, KAPAH paid the newspaper to print an overview of the family life education curriculum and explain the contentious issues. KAPAH's media

advocacy was so successful that they now regularly contribute views, opinions and advice to a column on adolescent health in a Kenyan newspaper. The column is sponsored and paid for by the Kenya Youth Initiative and funded by USAID.

Bravely, KAPAH also reached out to the opposition and engaged them in consultations in order to understand their concerns and to find common ground.

In addition, KAPAH met with individual policy makers and found that while these leaders supported adolescent health privately, it was difficult for some of them to take a public position on the subject. The Association made an effort to support these decision makers both publicly and "behind the scenes." As a result, KAPAH developed better relationships with several ministries including the Ministry of Education. In fact, KAPAH successfully advocated for pregnant school girls to be allowed to stay in school while pregnant and to return to school after delivery.

KAPAH's success has more and more agencies requesting advocacy training and the debate over adolescent reproductive health in Kenya has intensified.



Sharing experiences with the group

- ② Now that you have read the case study, discuss how you would define advocacy.

Note: It is not essential to develop a precise and elegant definition of advocacy which encompasses all its aspects. But, it is important to define what advocacy means to you.

- ② Describe the advocacy strategies KAPAH used?

Definition

Advocacy is an action directed at changing the policies, positions or programs of any type of institution.

Advocacy is pleading for, defending or recommending an idea before other people.

Advocacy is speaking up, drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision makers toward a solution.

continued...

Definition continued

Advocacy is working with other people and organizations to make a difference. (CEDPA, 1995).

Advocacy is putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building support for acting on both the problem and solution.

Advocacy can aim to change an organization internally or to alter an entire system.

Advocacy can involve many specific, short-term activities to reach a long-term vision of change.

Advocacy consists of different strategies aimed at influencing decision-making at the organizational, local, provincial, national and international levels.

Advocacy strategies can include lobbying, social marketing, information, education and communication (IEC), community organizing, or many other "tactics."

Advocacy is the process of people participating in decision-making processes which affect their lives.

Effective **advocacy** may succeed in influencing policy decision-making and implementation, by:

- ◆ educating leaders, policy makers, or those who carry out policies;
- ◆ reforming existing policies, laws and budgets, developing new programs;
- ◆ creating more democratic, open and accountable decision-making structures and procedures (InterAction, 1995).

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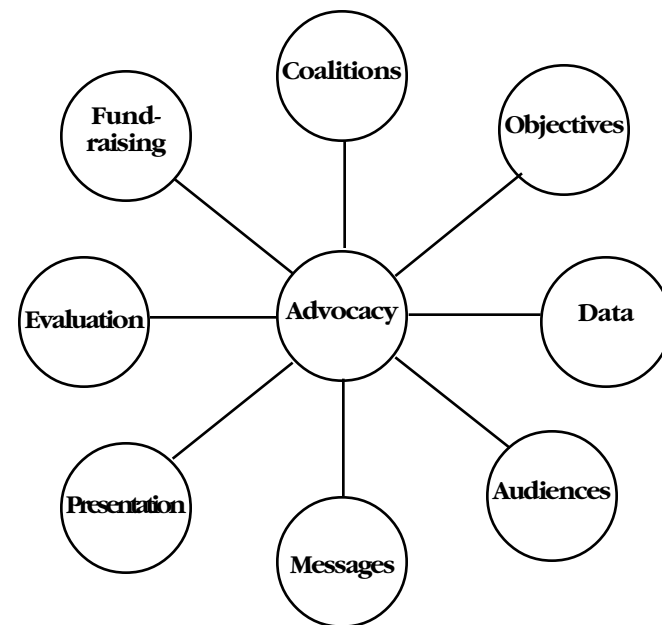


Which of these definitions describe things that you or your organization does?

B. Basic Elements of Advocacy

While specific advocacy techniques and strategies vary, the following elements form the basic building blocks for effective advocacy. Like building blocks, it is not necessary to use every single element to

The Basic Elements of Advocacy



create an advocacy strategy. In addition, these elements need not be used in the order presented. You can choose and combine the elements that are most useful to you.

As you examine the elements in the diagram, you may notice that some of these concepts are borrowed from such disciplines as political science, social marketing and behavioral analysis.

Selecting an Advocacy Objective

Problems can be extremely complex. In order for an advocacy effort to succeed, the goal must be narrowed down to an advocacy objective based on answers to questions such as: Can the issue bring diverse groups together into a powerful coalition? Is the objective achievable? Will the objective really address the problem?

Using Data and Research for Advocacy

Data and research are essential for making informed decisions when choosing a problem to work on, identifying solutions to the problem, and setting realistic goals. In addition, good data itself can be the most persuasive argument. Given the data, can you realistically reach the goal? What data can be used to best support your arguments?

Identifying Advocacy Audiences

Once the issue and goals are selected, advocacy efforts must be directed to the people with decision-making power and, ideally, to the people who influence the decision makers such as staff, advisors, influential elders, the media and the public. What are the names of the decision makers who can make your goal a reality? Who and what influences these decision makers?

Developing and Delivering Advocacy Messages

Different audiences respond to different messages. For example, a politician may become motivated when she knows how many people in her district care about the problem. A Minister of Health or Education may take action when he is presented with detailed data on the prevalence of the problem. What message will get the selected audience to act on your behalf?

**Building Coalitions**

Often, the power of advocacy is found in the numbers of people who support your goal. Especially where democracy and advocacy are new phenomena, involving large numbers of people representing diverse interests can provide safety for advocacy as well as build political support. Even within an organization, internal coalition building, such as involving people from different departments in developing a new program, can help build consensus for action. Who else can you invite to join your cause? Who else could be an ally?

**Making Persuasive Presentations**

Opportunities to influence key audiences are often limited. A politician may grant you one meeting to discuss your issue, or a minister may have only five minutes at a conference to speak with you. Careful and thorough preparation of convincing arguments and presentation style can turn these brief opportunities into successful advocacy. If you have one chance to reach the decision maker, what do you want to say and how will you say it?

**Fundraising for Advocacy**

Most activities, including advocacy, require resources. Sustaining an effective advocacy effort over the long-term means investing time and energy in raising funds or other resources to support your work. How can you gather the needed resources to carry out your advocacy efforts?

**Evaluating Advocacy Efforts**

How do you know if you have succeeded in reaching your advocacy objective? How can your advocacy strategies be improved? Being an effective advocate require continuous feedback and evaluations of your efforts.

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How could these elements strengthen your current work? Do you feel that any of these elements might be difficult to use in your context? Which ones and why?



Case Study

Using Advocacy to Stop Violence Against Women in Senegal

In April 1996, a number of women's associations in Senegal were startled by the story of "D", a woman who was severely beaten by her husband, a high-ranking officer in the army. According to the medical reports, D suffered from bruises and torn skin on parts of her body; she risked losing an eye and her hearing.

D's story was that while married to this man for nearly 20 years she had been constantly beaten and humiliated. Sometimes at night her husband would tie her in the goat pen. He forbade her from going to her grandmother's and her father's funeral.

Even before hearing D's story, women's associations in Senegal were alarmed by the renewed outbreak of violence against women in their country. Every week news stories were published about women and girls who were raped, beaten, or killed. Angered by D's case and determined to stop violence against women, several Senegalese women's associations mobilized and formed a committee in D's defense.

First, they began a national and international awareness campaign. They drafted a letter presenting D's case and sent it to local and international women's groups. In the letter they included the fax and telephone numbers of the President of Senegal, the Ministry for Women, and the Justice Ministry asking that these authorities punish D's husband and uphold Senegal's international obligations to respect women's rights. Many national and international associations sent letters and faxes.

The committee also:

- ◆ organized marches, sit-ins, and demonstrations in Dakar, the capital, and in the surrounding region;
- ◆ mobilized the press on the subject;
- ◆ reached out to Muslim and Christian religious leaders;
- ◆ raised funds for advocacy through contributions from members and other sympathizers;
- ◆ formed a special research committee to conduct research on violence against women;
- ◆ contacted lawyers, including high ranking officials in the lawyer's association.

Their advocacy made an immediate impact. D's husband, the high-ranking officer, was arrested and is now in prison awaiting judgement. D's defense committee organized a forum on violence against women in the city where D and her husband lived. The regional governor, the religious authorities, and representatives from the Ministry of Women all participated in the forum.

D's defense committee has been transformed into a permanent committee on violence against women and continues to work toward the following objectives:

- 1) Women's associations should be able to represent victims of violence legally.
- 2) When faced with an obvious offence of violence against women, authorities should be diligent in punishing the offenders.
- 3) If the offender is a woman's spouse or parent, he should be punished according to the law .
- 4) Every neighborhood should establish a place to welcome and listen to women who have suffered from domestic violence.
- 5) Police, medical, and legal personnel should be trained to listen to and help female victims of violence.



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Which of the *basic elements of advocacy* did these women advocates use?



Why do you think they were successful in defending D and raising awareness about violence against women?

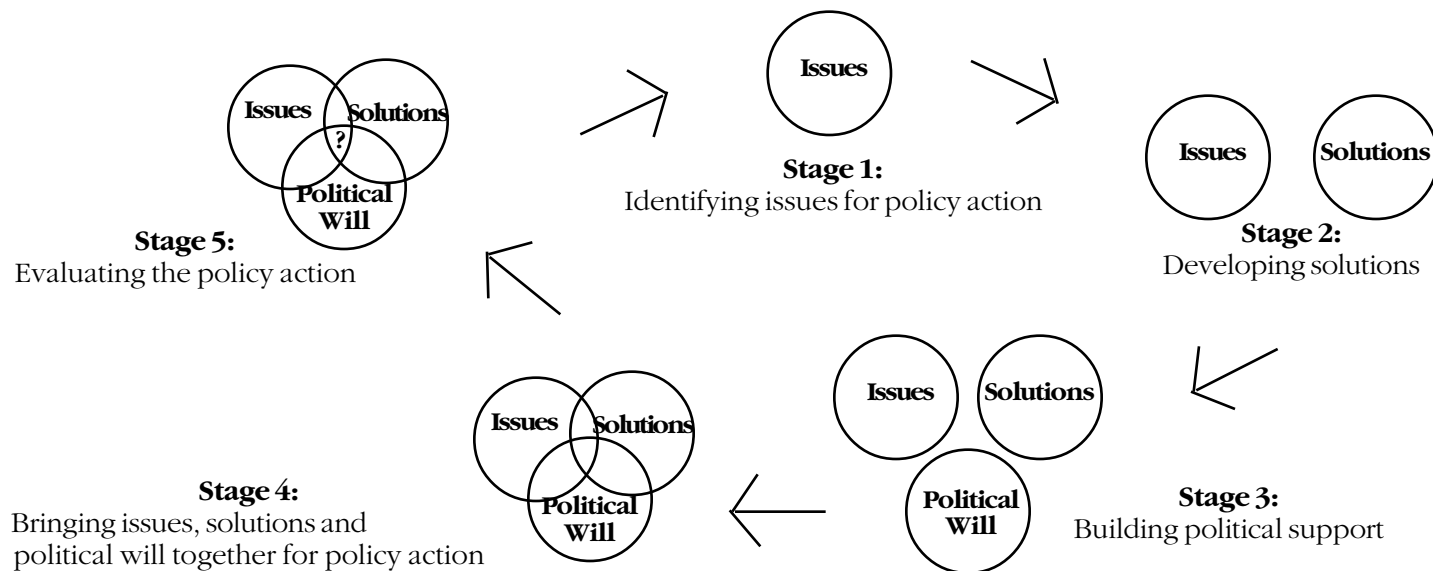
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C. A Conceptual Framework for Advocacy³

Advocacy is a dynamic process involving an ever-changing set of actors, ideas, agendas, and politics. This multifaceted process, however, can be divided into five fluid stages: issue identification, solution formulation and selection, awareness building, policy action, and evaluation. (Note: This framework is **not** intended to correlate with the modules.) These stages must be viewed as fluid because they may occur simultaneously or progressively. In addition, the process may stall or reverse itself.

The Dynamic Advocacy Process



³ Adapted from *Knowledge Utilization and the Process of Policy Formulation: Toward a Framework for Africa*.

The **first stage** is the identification of an issue for policy action. This stage is also referred to as agenda setting. There are an unlimited number of problems which need attention, but not all can get a place on the action agenda. Advocates decide which problem to address and attempt to get the target institution to recognize that the problem needs action.

Generally, the **second stage**, solution formulation, follows rapidly. Advocates and other key actors propose solutions to the problem and select one that is politically, economically, and socially feasible.

The **third stage**, building the political will to act on the problem and its solution, is the centerpiece of advocacy. Actions during this stage include coalition building, meeting with decision makers, awareness building and delivering effective messages.

The **fourth stage**, policy action, takes place when a problem is recognized, its solution is accepted and there is political will to act, **all at the same time**. This overlap is usually a short “window of opportunity” which advocates must seize. An understanding of the decision-making process and a solid advocacy strategy will increase the likelihood of creating windows of opportunity for action.

The **final stage**, evaluation, is often not reached, though it is important. Good advocates assess the effectiveness of their past efforts and set new goals based on their experience. Advocates and the institution that adopts the policy change should periodically evaluate the effectiveness of that change.



2

Identifying Policy Issues

It is often said that “the facts speak for themselves.” If this is true, then why don’t more decision makers base their actions on objective data and research? Why is it that so much good research and data is never used to influence policy? The policy process, that is, selecting one policy option from among several choices, is essentially a negotiation among various actors. In order to be included in the negotiation process, data and research must be translated into information and presented in formats that policy makers can understand and use.

In this way, the facts can be made to “speak” the language of policy makers, community leaders, advocates, the public and the media, and the influence of data and research will be amplified. Infusing the entire policy debate with solid research will undoubtedly improve the quality and effectiveness of policy actions. In this module, we will use data to identify policy issues and possible solutions.

Objectives

In this module, we will:

- A.** examine **data and the policy making process**;
- B.** use data to **identify issues** for policy action;
- C.** formulate **policy solutions** for the issues we identify.

A. Data and Policy Making

Definition

Data and Research:

Quantitative or qualitative information gathered through an objective process.

Policy Issue:

A problem or situation which an institution or organization could take action to solve.

Using Data and Research in Policy-Making

In this module, we will use data to:

- ◆ **identify** issues for policy action;
- ◆ **widen** the range of possible solutions to a problem.

We will see that data can also be used to:

- ◆ **affect** what is considered changeable or doable in a policy process;
- ◆ **choose** an advocacy goal;
- ◆ **directly influence** decision makers (the primary audience of an advocacy program);

- ❖ **inform** the media, public or others (the secondary audience) who indirectly influence decision makers;
- ❖ **support** an existing advocacy position;
- ❖ **counter** oppositional positions or arguments;
- ❖ **alter** the perceptions about an issue or problem;
- ❖ **challenge** myths and assumptions;
- ❖ **confirm** policy actions and programs that work;
- ❖ **reconsider** strategies that are not working.

Sharing experiences with the group

In pairs or small groups discuss the following questions then share your discussion with the full group.

- ① How have you used data and research to successfully influence policy decisions?
- ② Do you know any organizations that have used data and research in any of the ways listed above? How have they used the data?

B. Issue Identification

The process begins by identifying issues that require policy action, that is, problems that can be addressed by the actions of institutions and individuals representing these institutions.

A variety of policy actors identify issues for action using techniques ranging from the spontaneous generation of ideas to the cautious and deliberate study of issues. Refugee interest groups, for example, may highlight a crisis and call for urgent policy action, while economic research institutes might ponder a situation thoroughly before offering a policy proposal.

Research data can bring suspected or even unknown issues into focus and can provide a comparison among issues. Data may also uncover constraints that may signal potential difficulties in the advocacy process.

Let's use the Kenyan Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) data from 1993 to see how data can be used to identify issues for policy action.

Sharing experiences with the group

- ① Take 10-15 minutes to review and examine the data from the KDHS Male Survey presented in the following tables.
- ② Try to draw just one idea from each chart about how Kenya's family planning program could be improved.

Table 1:

Knowledge of contraceptive methods and source for methods

Percentage of men who know specific contraceptive methods and who know a source (for information or services), by specific methods, Kenya, 1993.

Contraceptive method	Know a method	Know a source
Any method	98.9	94.9
Any modern method	97.8	93.3
Pill	93.3	81.1
Condom	94.2	84.8
Male sterilization	55.7	49.5
Any traditional method	88.7	65.1

Source: Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 1993.

Table 2:

Current use of contraception

Percentage of men currently using a contraceptive method, Kenya, 1993.

Contraceptive method	Percent using method
Using any method	50.8
Any modern method	30.8
Pill	8.2
Condom	11.8
Male sterilization	N/A
Any traditional method	20.1
Not currently using any method	49.2

Source: Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 1993.

Table 3:**Reasons for not using contraception**

Percentage of men who are not currently using a contraceptive method and who do not intend to use in the future by main reason for not using, Kenya, 1993.

Reason for not using	Percentage
Wants children	25.7
Menopausal/wife had hysterectomy	25.4
Lack of knowledge	10.0
Opposed to family planning	9.8
Difficult to get pregnant	6.0
Partner opposed	4.4
Side effects	2.6
Other health concerns	2.5
Fatalistic	1.7
Hard to get methods	1.3
Infrequent sex	0.6
Inconvenient	0.6
Fears sterility	0.4
Don't know	1.5
Other	2.3

Source: Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 1993.

The following example from the KDHS male survey data suggests possible issues that could be selected for policy action. These are all issues that institutional policies or resources could influence.

Example**The data suggest:**

Issue 1: Overall knowledge of contraception among men is high, but lower for the specific method of male sterilization (Table 1).

Issue 2: Knowledge of contraception among men is very high, but current use among men is low. Knowledge of modern methods is 97.8% and 93.3% of men know a source for a modern method, but only 30.8% of men are using a modern method (Tables 1 and 2).

Issue 3: Desire for more children is the reason cited by 25.7% of men for non-use of a contraceptive method (Table 3).

*Sharing experiences
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Look again at the KDHS data to see what other issues might you add.

C. Policy Solutions

You have identified several problems or issues that require action. The next step is to develop policy solutions for these problems. What can an organization (such as a national family planning provider) or an institution (such as a government ministry of health) do to help solve the problem?

For example, in the previous tables we found that men are aware of family planning in general, but they do not know much about male sterilization. This is the problem or policy issue. In what ways could organizations or government institutions help solve this problem? Family planning providers who conduct education programs could decide to increase attention to male sterilization as a contraceptive option. This is a policy solution.

At this stage, it is enough to identify possible solutions; it is not critical to reach consensus on each solution.

*Sharing experiences
with the group*



List other possible policy solutions you can think of for the following example.

The following example identifies problems **and** solutions for the Kenyan example presented earlier.

Example

Problem 1:

Low knowledge of male sterilization.

Policy Solution:

Direct family planning education programs to increase attention to male sterilization.

Problem 2:

Contraceptive use among men is relatively low compared to high level of knowledge.

Policy Solution:

Increase donor funding for new programs which would aim to increase contraceptive use among men.


Problem 3:

Men desire large families.

Policy Solution:

Ministry of Social affairs should target men in a public education program on smaller families.

Sharing experiences with the group

-  What solution(s) would you propose for the issue(s) you identified from the KDHS data?

Exercises



Examine your own data or data provided by your facilitator, then:

1. Identify three issues which require policy action.
2. For each issue, list at least one policy-relevant solution (i.e., a solution that requires action from an institution or organization).



If you have an advocacy goal or objective, but lack data to support it, consider what kind of data you need to find or collect.

1. What research is needed to support your advocacy goal or objective?
2. Where can you find this information?

Annex

Factors which Promote or Hinder the Use of Data and Research for Advocacy and Policy-making

Factors which *promote* the use of data and research

The information needs of the policy maker are taken into account when designing the study.

Research is conducted by an organization that policy makers perceive as credible and reliable.

Research is focused on a few questions that can be answered.

Findings are presented in multiple formats, tailored to each audience.

Findings are disseminated to multiple audiences using a variety of channels. Audiences receive the same message from diverse sources.

Presentations of findings to policy makers emphasize the important lessons that were learned, rather than the need for more research.

Factors which *hinder* the use of data and research

Research questions (and findings) that are not relevant to policy decisions.

The timing is off: the research answered yesterday's questions or assessed yesterday's program.

The research is conducted or presented by an organization or individual that is not credible to policy makers.

Findings are inconclusive or subject to widely differing interpretations.

Findings are unwelcome because they are negative and/or not presented with policy relevant solutions.

Findings are not generalizable.

Findings are presented in lengthy, technical, or jargon-laden reports.

Findings are not widely disseminated.

Source: Adapted from *Utilization of Education Results for Policy Advocacy*.

3

Selecting an Advocacy Objective

In Module 2, you identified issues for policy/programmatic action and corresponding solutions. Selecting one of these solutions to work on as an advocacy objective is the next step in planning your advocacy effort.

Advocacy, in this Guide, means advocating for policy change. When choosing an advocacy objective consider the political climate, the probability of success, research and data on your issue, money available to support your advocacy efforts, your organization's capacities, and your own capabilities. This module will introduce how you can use some basic criteria to choose an advocacy objective.

If, however, you have already defined an advocacy objective, analyze it based on the criteria presented here to help uncover potential obstacles or possible allies. The same criteria can be used to analyze and/or choose an overall advocacy goal or issue.

Can you choose more than one objective to work on at a time? This depends on your organizational and personal resources for advocacy. It is generally advisable to focus your work on only as many objectives as you can realistically achieve. Advocates who attempt to fix everything run the risk of changing nothing in the process. The purpose of this module is to assist you in focusing on an objective that is realistic, achievable and worthwhile. Succeeding first with smaller objectives will give you and your organization more enthusiasm, experience *and credibility* to conquer more ambitious objectives.

Objectives

In this module, we will:

- A. examine **advocacy for policy change**,
- B. **illustrate criteria** to compare your advocacy objectives using an advocacy checklist.

The discussions and exercises will help you:

- ♦ develop your own **additional criteria**;
- ♦ **assess** your goal and potential advocacy objectives using the criteria, and **select** an objective.

A. Advocacy for Policy Change

What is an Advocacy Goal?

The **goal** is the subject of your advocacy effort. It is what you hope to achieve over the next 10-20 years.

The **advocacy goal** can be general. For example, “reduce childhood malnutrition to improve children’s health” or “make safe and effective family planning available to all who wish to prevent pregnancies.”

The **goal** can be your vision.

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with the group*

- ① What is your *advocacy goal*?
- ① What is your vision for the future?
- ① Are they the same or different? Why?

What is an Advocacy Objective?

An advocacy objective aims to *change* the policies, programs or positions of governments, institutions or organizations.

Your **advocacy objective** is what you want to change, who will make the change, by how much and by when. Generally, the time frame for an **advocacy objective** will be 1-3 years.

An **objective** is an incremental and realistic step toward a larger goal or your vision; it is not a general goal (increase family planning use among couples). Rather, the policy advocacy objective must focus on a specific action that an institution can take. An **objective** should be specific and measurable.

How can you be certain that your advocacy objective is to change policy?

As you are defining your objective, be as specific as possible so that you can develop an effective strategy to reach your policy change goal. You must know the target institution and decision makers in order to create a persuasive communication plan and to discern how you can influence the institution's

decision making process. The advocacy objective should be specific and measurable so that you will know whether or not you have attained your objective in the time frame you have specified.

Example

Advocacy Objectives

In the next two years, start a government-sponsored program to fortify salt with iodine in order to increase intellectual capacity and reduce neonatal mortality.

Increase national funding for family planning by 25% in the next two years.

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First, how can you tell that the examples above are policy advocacy objectives? Next, read the example on the next page. For each statement, explain why one example is an advocacy objective and one is not?

Example

Is an advocacy objective	Is not an advocacy objective
Start a national government program to build twelve schools in each district in the next two years. *****	Increase girls' attendance at district level primary schools. *****
In the next year, increase funding for family planning education programs for married couples through the Family Planning Council.	Increase the use of family planning among married couples.

Sharing experiences
with the group

Read the following statements (A-E) and answer the questions in small groups.

- ① identify which are advocacy objectives for policy change. Explain why they are and the others are not.

- ② How can you change the non-advocacy objective statements into advocacy objectives?

- ③ Choose one of the advocacy objectives and analyze how it could be made more precise and realistic.

- Promote condom use among men to prevent the transmission of HIV and STDs.
- Within the next year, the Ministry of Health will start a social marketing campaign to promote breast-feeding.
- Increase primary school enrollments for girls.
- Take actions to reduce the incidence of spousal physical abuse.
- Over the next six months, at least four community and religious leaders will publicly support men's use of family planning methods.

- ④ What do you want to change? Who will make the change? By how much and by when? Share one of your advocacy objectives.

B. Illustrative Criteria

Definition

What are criteria?

Criteria are questions or standards that are used to select a goal or compare different objectives.

Examples of criteria are: “Is the objective achievable?” or “Do the data show that achieving this objective will have a real impact on the problem?”

A Checklist for Selecting an Advocacy Objective¹

The purpose of this checklist of criteria is to assist you in making an informed choice about what advocacy objective to pursue. If you have already identified an objective, this tool can help you recognize areas that need special attention or can be strengthened.

A feasible objective will meet many of these checklist criteria, but not necessarily all of them. Even if your objective only meets three or four of these criteria, it should not be dismissed. By testing

¹The criteria are adapted from *Organizing for Social Change*.

your advocacy objective using these criteria, you will gain valuable information about what you can expect to encounter if you choose a particular objective and which areas might need improvement or special attention during the advocacy process.

A series of examples from a hypothetical case study on childhood malnutrition is presented, followed by illustrative criteria for selecting an advocacy objective.



Case Study

Example

ADVOCACY GOAL

Reduce under-five childhood malnutrition in order to reduce child mortality and morbidity and improve child development.

OBJECTIVE 1

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture in cooperation with the Ministry of Health will start a national program to fortify salt with iodine in the next two years.

OBJECTIVE 2

The Ministry of Health will start a community-based nutrition education program to improve young child feeding practices in the next year.



Do qualitative or quantitative data exist to show that achieving the objective will improve the situation?

Improving the lives of people in a tangible way is satisfying and builds a sense of efficacy for an advocacy effort as a whole. Good data about an issue is essential. Knowing the true extent of the problem will help you choose an advocacy objective that is not out of reach. If data are not available or are insufficient, collect your own or obtain research from other sources before you choose an advocacy objective. The effectiveness of an advocacy effort can be subsequently verified by collecting data on the change in incidence or prevalence of the problem after the objective has been achieved.

Example

For Objective 1

Research shows that salt is produced and processed centrally. Our data indicate that iodine deficiency is widespread and associated with neonatal mortality and reduced intellectual capacity. Fortifying salt could reverse these negative outcomes.

For Objective 2

Program evaluations show that nutrition education can enhance child survival in areas where food is available. Studies show that programs are more effective when educational messages are developed for specific audiences. The impact of educational programs might be difficult to measure.



Is the objective achievable? Even with opposition?

The problem and its solution must not be so large or so remote that you and/or your organization will become overwhelmed. In addition, people or groups will be more likely to join your effort if they see from the start that a reasonable chance of succeeding exists. Also consider that opposition to your advocacy effort might arise. Ask yourself whether you can still achieve your objective in the face of this opposition.

Example

For Objective 1

Opposition to the cost of salt fortification could slow the time frame for achieving the advocacy objective, but it is achievable. Producers may oppose the regulation and quality control of salt production.

For Objective 2

This advocacy objective involves working with the Ministry of Health and community organizations. Community leaders may oppose it if they are not involved early in the process.



Will the goal/objective gain the support of many people? Do people care about the goal/objective deeply enough to take action?

The more people who support a goal and an advocacy objective, the more likely that decision makers will be willing to act. People must be interested in and supportive of the goal or objective, and care enough about it to act. Actions may include, for example, writing a letter to the Prime Minister expressing support for salt fortification, participating in a meeting at a district health clinic to push for nutrition education programs, or persuading an influential person to informally express support for your objective to key decision makers.

Example

For Objective 1

The general public will likely support salt fortification if prices do not increase. Food producers may resist if they must share costs; otherwise they will support this objective. People may be motivated to act because the objective is concrete and will have a significant impact on child survival and development.

For Objective 2

Women's organizations will be very supportive. Nutrition education is recognized by donors to be an important part of child survival programs. In many communities, however, the problems and consequences of malnutrition are not well recognized.



Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the goal/objective?

Is your goal one that donors, private agencies or individuals would be interested in funding? If many people care about the goal, could you develop a self-financing mechanism to sustain your advocacy efforts, such as a membership organization? Would other organizations be willing to make in-kind contributions of staff time or resources to sustain the advocacy effort? (Fundraising techniques are discussed further in Module 10.)

Example

For Objective 1

Several donors are currently supporting salt fortification.

For Objective 2

Although donors recognize the need for nutrition education, funds are limited and most donors are supporting other child survival interventions. It will be difficult to raise funds for this objective so organizations may have to use their own funds.



Can you clearly identify the target decision makers? What are their names or positions?

The “target” is the person or persons who have the decision-making authority to approve your objective. These decision makers are the primary audience for an advocacy effort. If you cannot clearly identify the decision makers who have the power to decide on your advocacy objective, you may need to narrow your objective so as to target your audience.

Example

For Objective 1

To start a government-sponsored salt fortification program, the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Health will all have to approve the program.

For Objective 2

To start a community-based nutrition education program, the Minister of Health, district health officers and key community leaders will have to agree on and approve the program.



Is the goal/objective easy to understand?

A good goal should not require a lengthy technical explanation. If you do need to explain, can you keep the explanation clear and short? For example: “One of six children in our country dies before the age of five because of under- or malnourishment. Research shows that fortifying salt with iodine will reduce infant deaths and improve children’s development and will cost only 2 to 5 cents per person per year.”

Example

For Objective 1

The links between iodine deficiency and intellectual impairment and neonatal mortality have been widely publicized, so the general public will likely understand it. Some promotion will be required to create demand for this product.

For Objective 2

The links between young child feeding practices and child survival are proven, but not as easy to understand. Careful qualitative research will be required to develop appropriate educational messages.



Does the advocacy objective have a clear time frame that is realistic?

Some time frames are internal, that is, they are set by the organization or people involved in the advocacy effort. Other time frames are external; they are set, for example, by the date the Parliament will discuss your goal or by the meeting schedules of organizational leaders. If you plan to have an impact on a decision that will be made on a certain date, can you get organized quickly enough? If there are no external time frames, set your own clear and realistic time frame to achieve your objective.

Example

For Objective 1

The time frame to begin a salt fortification program is two years. It is realistic.

For Objective 2

The time frame to begin the nutrition education program is one year. It is an opportune time to advocate for such a program because district health officers are developing their five-year plans at the moment.



Do you have the necessary alliances with key individuals or organizations to reach your advocacy objective? How will the objective help build new alliances with other NGOs, leaders, or stakeholders?

Alliances with key organizations or individuals can greatly assist in achieving an advocacy objective. For example, to reach Objective 1 (start a salt fortification program) it would be extremely beneficial to gain the salt producers' support early. The salt producers, as businesses, may be able to get the support of the Minister of Finance most effectively. It is wise to choose advocacy objectives with the potential to unite people from various sectors or organizations.

Example

For Objective 1

This objective will strengthen relationships with child survival NGOs, the private sector, key government leaders and the general public. Also, we should seek support from salt producers since they must implement the program and can assist us in our advocacy efforts.

For Objective 2

This objective will strengthen ties between community organizations and the health system and improve the general public's perception of the health system.



Will working on the advocacy objective provide people with opportunities to learn about and become involved with the decision-making process?

Advocacy can serve the important purpose of opening the decision-making process to input from stakeholders, such as researchers, service providers, beneficiaries, and the public itself. The process of advocacy opens new dialogues which can move decision makers toward better and more informed decisions. In addition, involving a wide array of stakeholders can greatly strengthen an advocacy effort.

Example

For Objective 1

Advocating for a salt fortification program will open dialogue between researchers, the government, the private sector and the public to find ways to solve an important nutrition problem.

For Objective 2

Advocating for a community-based nutrition education program will bring community members together with district health officers to find ways to improve young child feeding programs.

Sharing experiences with the group



Based on your situation or context, do you need to add any other criteria to the checklist?



Which of the two advocacy objectives presented in the case study would you choose? Why?

The following two pages present a table of the hypothetical case study goal we have just examined—*Reducing under-five childhood malnutrition in order to reduce child mortality and morbidity and improve child development*. This table illustrates how to use the checklist to compare the potential advocacy objectives you are considering.



Case Study Summary

CRITERIA	GOAL	OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2
	Reduce under-five childhood malnutrition to reduce child mortality and morbidity and improve child development.	The Ministry of Food and Agriculture will start a national program to fortify salt with iodine in the next two years.	The Ministry of Health will start a community-based nutrition education program to improve young child feeding practices in the next year.
Do qualitative or quantitative data exist to show that reaching the objective will improve the situation?	The links between childhood malnutrition and childhood morbidity and mortality and intellectual capacity are well proven.	Research shows that salt is produced and processed centrally. Data indicate that iodine deficiency is widespread, and associated with neonatal mortality and reduced intellectual capacity. Fortifying salt could reverse these negative outcomes.	Program evaluations show that nutrition education can enhance child survival in areas where adequate food is available. Studies show that programs are more effective when educational messages are developed for specific audiences. Impact might be difficult to measure.
Is the objective achievable? Even with opposition?	Not applicable.	Opposition to the cost of salt fortification could slow the time frame for achieving the objective, but it is achievable. Producers may oppose the regulation and quality control of salt production.	This advocacy objective involves working with the Ministry of Health and community organizations. Community leaders may oppose it if they are not involved early in the process.
Will the objective gain the support of many people? Do people care about the goal/objective deeply enough to take action?	Most politicians, donors, and the general public support child survival goals. Several NGOs are working on child nutrition. Parents care about the goal and will take action if actions are concrete. The depth of caring among decision makers will need to be improved.	The general public will likely support salt fortification if prices do not increase. Food producers may resist if they must share costs; otherwise they will support this objective. People may take action because the objective is concrete and will have a significant impact on child survival and development.	Women's organizations will be supportive. Nutrition education is recognized by donors to be an important part of child survival programs. In many communities, however, the problems and consequences of malnutrition are not well recognized.
Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the goal/objective?	Depends on the objective.	Several donors are currently supporting salt fortification.	Although donors recognize the need for nutrition education, funds are limited and most donors are supporting other child survival interventions. It will be difficult to raise funds so organizations may have to use their own.

Case Study Summary

CRITERIA	GOAL	OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2
	Reduce under-five childhood malnutrition to reduce child mortality and morbidity and improve child development.	The Ministry of Agriculture will start a national program to fortify salt with iodine in the next two years.	The Ministry of Health will start a community-based nutrition education program to improve young child feeding practices in the next year.
Can you clearly identify the target decision makers? What are their names or positions?	Not applicable	To start a government-sponsored salt fortification program, the Prime Minister, and Ministers of Finance, Agriculture and Health will all have to approve the program.	To start a community-based nutrition education program the Minister of Health, district health officers and key community leaders will have to agree and approve the program.
Is the goal/objective easy to understand?	Yes.	The links between iodine deficiency and intellectual impairment and neonatal mortality have been widely publicized, so the general public will likely understand it. Some promotion will be needed to create demand for this product.	The links between young child feeding practices and child survival are proven but not as easy to understand. Careful qualitative research will be required to develop appropriate educational messages.
Does the objective have a clear time frame that is realistic?	Not applicable	The time frame to begin a salt fortification program is the next two years. It is realistic.	The time frame to begin the nutrition education program is one year. It is an opportune time to advocate for such a program because district health officers are developing their five-year plans at the moment.
Do you have the necessary alliances with key individuals or organizations to reach your objective? How will the objective help build alliances with other NGOs, leaders or stakeholders?	A child survival goal will strengthen our organization's relationships with other NGOs, the private sector, key government leaders and the general public. We may not work with other sectors.	This objective will strengthen relationships with NGOs, the private sector, key government leaders and the general public. We should seek support from salt producers since they must implement the program and can assist with advocacy efforts.	This objective will strengthen ties between community organizations and the health system and improve the general public's perception of the health system.
Will working on the objective give people opportunities to learn about and become involved with the decision-making process?	Not applicable.	Advocating for a salt fortification program will open dialogue between researchers, the government, the private sector, and the public to find ways to solve an important nutrition problem.	Advocating for a community-based nutrition education program will bring community members together with district health officers to find ways to improve young child feeding programs.

Exercises

Now that you have worked through some hypothetical examples, use the same process with a goal and objectives from your own experience. First, working in pairs or small groups, use the following checklist to examine your own selected goal. Share the results of your analysis and reasoning with the large group.



First, clearly state your goal at the top of the chart. (Make sure it meets the definition of an advocacy goal as stated on p. 22.)



Add any criteria you feel you should consider, based on your situation.



Analyze your goal based on the criteria.

Checklist of Criteria for Analyzing a Goal

Criteria	Goal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will the goal attract the support of many people? Do people care about the goal deeply enough to take action?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the goal?	

Checklist of Criteria for Analyzing Goal

Criteria	Goal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the goal easy to understand?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will the goal help build alliances with other sectors, NGOs, leaders, or stakeholders? Which ones and why?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Next, working with your partner or small group, use the following checklist to analyze two possible advocacy objectives.



First, clearly state the two advocacy objectives you choose to analyze. Be sure that they are advocacy objectives; test them against the definition of an advocacy objective. (An advocacy objective aims to change the policies, positions, or programs of governments, institutions or organizations. See page 23.)



Select the criteria you feel you should consider and add criteria that are important given your context.



Evaluate each objective based on these criteria. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each objective.



When you have completed the checklists for goal and objective analysis, compare the information in the checklists. From your analysis, choose the better advocacy objective for your situation and explain your choice to the large group.

Checklist of Criteria for Analyzing an Advocacy Objective

Criteria	Objective 1	Objective 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do qualitative or quantitative data exist which show that reaching the objective will result in real improvements in the situation?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the objective achievable? Even with opposition?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will many people support the objective? Do people care about the objective deeply enough to take action?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will you be able to raise money or other resources to support your work on the objective?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can you clearly identify the target decision makers? What are their names or positions?		

Checklist of Criteria for Analyzing an Advocacy Objective

Criteria	Objective 1	Objective 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does the objective have a clear time frame that is realistic?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do you have the alliances with key individuals or organizations needed to reach your objective? Will the objective help build alliances with other sectors, NGOs, leaders, or stakeholders? Which ones?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the objective easy to understand?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will working on the objective provide people with opportunities to learn more about and become involved with the decision-making process?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

4

Researching Policy Audiences

You have identified issues for action and chosen an advocacy objective. How can you build the support you need to make your objective a reality? Who needs to be convinced to take action? Who can help you reach your objective?

An audience-centered approach, based on social marketing techniques, offers the necessary tools to distinguish, analyze, reach and motivate key policy players. These techniques can help you target the institutions and people that are critical to your success, rather than attempting to reach all decision makers and all sectors of society.

To understand the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of your audience, you must do some audience research. Begin your research with audience segmentation—a way of grouping decision makers, influential leaders, NGOs, or professional associations into sub-groups with similar characteristics. You can learn about—and target your messages to the particular concerns of—each sub-group.

In addition to being familiar with what any given audience knows and feels about your objective, it is also critical to learn about the internal norms, informal rules or “codes of conduct” that the group might have.

Objectives

In this module, we will:

- A. identify primary and secondary **policy audiences**;
- B. review and develop several **audience research techniques**;
- C. chart your **audiences' beliefs**, knowledge, and attitudes regarding your objective.

A. Policy Audiences

One constructive way to separate audiences into groups is to identify **primary** and **secondary** audiences.

Definition

What is a primary audience?

The primary audience includes decision makers with the authority to affect the outcome for your objective directly. These are the individuals who must actively approve the policy change. These decision makers are the primary “targets” of an advocacy strategy.

Example

Advocacy objective:

To pass a law to mandate and fund the building of 100 community schools for girls.

Primary audience:

Minister of Education, Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister. Members of Parliament may also play a role.

Definition

What is a secondary audience?

The secondary audiences are individuals and groups that can influence the decision makers (or primary audience). The opinions and actions of these “influentials” are important in achieving the advocacy objective *in so far as* they affect the opinions and actions of the decision makers.

Some members of a primary audience can also be a secondary audience if they can influence other decision makers. For example, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education might influence one another’s opinions. Therefore, they are both a primary audience (“targets”) and a secondary audience (“influentials”).

In addition, your secondary audience may contain **oppositional forces** to your objective. If so, it is extremely important to include these groups on your list, learn about them, and address them as part of your strategy.

Example

Advocacy objective:

To pass a law to mandate and fund the building of 100 community schools for girls.

Secondary audience might include:

Key staff of Members of Parliament, advisors to the Minister of Education, Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, speech writers, key women’s non-governmental organizations, parent organizations, teachers unions, newspapers that these decision makers read regularly, and foreign donors.

There are many kinds of policy audiences. Broad, loose groups such as “parents” can be targeted, or highly specified groups such as an individual parent organization located in the province of a key Parliamentarian. The key to effective advocacy is focusing on audiences that can have an impact on the decision-making process.

Below are some possibilities for both primary and secondary policy audiences:

Definition

What is a Policy Audience?

politicians (local, provincial, national)
 businesses or business leaders
 nongovernmental organizations
 community groups
 religious groups/churches
 political parties
 labor organizations
 academics/universities
 professionals
 opposition leaders
 speech writers
 spouses of politicians
 media
 women's organizations
 ministry officials
 voters
 United Nations' agencies
 other governments
 multinational corporations
 direct service organizations
 practitioners
 opinion leaders
 many, many more....

Identifying Target Audiences

Policy Map 1: Audience Identification Chart

“Policy Mapping” is a tool used to identify and learn about critical audiences. The first stage of policy mapping is to list key decision makers and the individuals and groups that can influence these decision makers. Ranking the decision makers by importance is also extremely helpful in planning your strategy. If you are unsure or don't know, you will need to do some research. Identifying the important decision makers and audiences is a constant task for advocates.

The following case study uses a policy map to identify audiences for an advocacy objective related to girls' education.

Sample Policy Map 1: Who Are Your Audiences?¹

Advocacy Objective: Pass a law to mandate and fund the building of 100 community schools for girls.	
Primary Audience Targets	Secondary Audience “Influentials”
	Minister’s staff person for educational issues religious leaders with whom the PM consults regularly (could be opposition) Ministers of Education and Finance international donors national newspapers women’s groups/NGOs
Minister of Education	Prime Minister Minister of Finance speech writers national and local parent organizations (could be opposition) teachers union national newspapers
Minister of Finance	Prime Minister international donors more research needed
Chair of Parliamentary Council on Education	Minister of Education teachers union
All members of Parliament	Prime Minister Ministers of Education and Finance teachers union national newspapers and radio programs voters

¹ Adapted from *Policy Players: A Power Map for Advocacy Planning*.

Exercise

Policy Map 1: Who Are Your Audiences?¹

Advocacy Objective:	
Primary Audience “Targets”	Secondary Audience “Influentials”
1.	1. 2. 3. 4.
2.	1. 2. 3. 4.
3.	1. 2. 3. 4.
4.	1. 2. 3. 4.

Sharing experiences with the group

- ① In small groups, brainstorm about which key decision makers and other influential players are related to your advocacy objective.
- ② Who needs to take action? (Rank the decision makers in order of importance).
- ③ Who can influence these action-takers (decision makers)?

(Use the blank chart on the preceding page to fill in your answers).

B. Policy Audience Research

Once you have identified your primary and secondary audiences, how can you learn what their opinions, attitudes and beliefs are about your advocacy issue and objective? A number of techniques follow that can be used for audience research.

Audience Research Methods

Observation

This is the most common way to gather information about audiences cheaply and quickly.

- ◆ Talk with people who are familiar with the group/individual;
- ◆ Gossip: talk with other advocates and colleagues. This is especially helpful in learning what audiences *really* think about issues; their true opinion may be different from their “official” position;
- ◆ Read speeches or other documents written by the key organizations or individuals;
- ◆ Review the results of recent polls, surveys or focus groups;
- ◆ Attend open meetings where the individual or group will be speaking or participating.

continued...

Audience Research Methods

(continued)

Surveys/Polls

Survey techniques are generally used to learn about large audiences such as “voters,” “parents” or “youth.”

- ◆ Ask about surveys or polls that might be planned by donor agency projects, the media or advertising firms to which you might add a few questions related to your issue.
- ◆ Polls or surveys should be conducted by organizations that the primary audience would find credible.

Focus Groups

Focus groups give an in-depth perspective on what people think and why. This method is particularly useful in testing policy messages.

- ◆ Limit discussion to a few, narrow topics;
- ◆ Participants should come from similar backgrounds and share similar characteristics such as age, gender, etc., so that they will feel comfortable stating their true feelings.

continued...

Audience Research Methods

(continued)

Interviews

Conduct individual interviews with a representative if you cannot afford to do a survey, poll, or focus group.

- ◆ Limit questions to a few topics and be sure that the people being interviewed are truly representative of your audience.

Sharing experiences with the group

- ① Where can you get more information about what the audiences you identified in the exercises think and feel about your advocacy objective?
- ② Which of the above techniques would be useful?
- ③ What other ways could you gather information?

C. Audience Beliefs

Policy Map 2: Audience Knowledge and Attitudes Chart

The second phase of policy mapping is to chart what audiences know, believe and feel about an issue. In addition, knowing what other issues an audience cares deeply about can be useful. If you can link your goal to one of those issues, the audience is

much more likely to support your effort. For example, if parents' primary concern is earning income, you could link girls' education to better economic prospects for the family. If you are unsure about how an audience feels or what they know, enter "research needed" in the appropriate box (see example in the chart).

Sample Policy Map 2: What Do Your Audiences Know and Think?			
Advocacy Objective: Pass a law to mandate and fund the building of 100 community schools for girls.			
Audience	Audience knowledge about issue/objective	Audience beliefs and attitudes about issue/objective	Issues that the audience cares about (may be unrelated to your issue)
Prime Minister	Knows little about girl's education.	Girls'and womens' issues not important to PM. Believes that women should be family caretakers and do not require education.	International trade/ business World Bank loans Re-election
Minister of Education	Knows a lot about girls' education and community schools. Understands the sociological and economic aspects of girls' education.	Is somewhat supportive of girls' education, but only as a lower priority.	New school reform plan Technology for schools and science education

Sample Policy Map 2: What Do Your Audiences Know and Think?
(continued)

Audience	Audience knowledge about issue/objective	Audience beliefs and attitudes about issue/objective	Issues that the audience cares about (may be unrelated to your issue)
Parent organizations	Know that girls generally lack access to education, but are not fully familiar with the benefits of girls' education. <i>More research needed on these groups.</i>	Parents feel that boys should have first access to education, then girls. <i>More research needed on parent attitudes (especially differences in mother/father attitudes).</i>	Quality of teaching School fees
National newspapers	<i>Research needed.</i>	<i>Research needed.</i>	Elections Political scandals

Exercises



Using what you already know about your audiences, describe the knowledge about and attitudes toward your objective for each audience. Indicate where more research is needed. Use the blank chart on the following page.



For areas in which more research is required, discuss with your group how you might get the information.

Exercise

Policy Map 2: What Do Your Audiences Know and Think?			
Advocacy Objective:			
Audience	Audience knowledge about issue/objective	Audience beliefs and attitudes about issue/objective	Issues that the audience cares about (may be unrelated to your issue)

5

Developing and Delivering Policy Messages

One of the most effective ways to build awareness about your issue and to generate backing for your goal is to divide your audience into groups and develop a “message” to which each group will respond. Module 4 introduced audience research and segmentation. This module will help you develop messages and explore options for message delivery.

Objectives

In this module, we will:

- A. **develop messages** and choose an appropriate **delivery format** for these messages;
- B. **identify specific audiences** and tailor message format and content for maximum impact.

A. Message Development and Delivery

Definition

What is a message?

A “message” is a concise and persuasive statement about your advocacy goal that captures what you want to achieve, why and how. Since the underlying purpose of a message is to create action, your message should also include the specific action you would like the audience to take.

Example

A message to parliamentarians might be:
“Involving men is the key to reaching Kenya’s family planning goals. Investing in family planning education programs for men brings birth rates down. Pass the Men’s Family Partnership Act now.”
 Sometimes policy messages are abbreviated into slogans such as *“Fathers Count: Support the Men’s Family Planning Partnership.”*

Five Key Elements of Messages

Content is only one part of a message. Other non-verbal factors such as who delivers the message, where a meeting takes place or the timing of the message can be as, or more, important than the content alone. In addition, sometimes what *is not* said delivers a louder message than what *is* said.

Content/Ideas: What ideas do you want to convey? What arguments will you use to persuade your audience?

Language: What words will you choose to get your message across clearly and effectively? Are there words you should or should not use?

Source/Messenger: Who will the audience respond to and find credible?

Format: Which way(s) will you deliver your message for maximum impact? e.g., a meeting, letter, brochure, or radio ad?

Time and Place: When is the best time to deliver the message? Is there a place to deliver your message that will enhance its credibility or give it more political impact?

Elements of Message Content

- ◆ **What** you want to achieve;
- ◆ **Why** to want to achieve it (the positive result of taking action and/or the negative consequence of inaction);
- ◆ **How** you propose to achieve it;
- ◆ **What action** you want the audience to take.

Successful messages often incorporate words, phrases or ideas that have positive connotations or that have particular significance to a target group. Words such as “family,” “independence,” “well-being,” “community” or “national security” are some examples.

Sharing experiences with the group



What are some words, phrases or ideas that are important to your audience(s)?

(Refer to the audience research you completed in Module 4.)

Three Tips for Message Development and Delivery

- 1. Deliver a consistent message to an audience through a variety of channels over an extended period of time.** Messages will not be absorbed by audiences and influence their opinions overnight—repetition is vital. Consistency is also crucial so do not change your message until it has been absorbed by your audience. Deliver the same message in different ways, using different words, so it does not become boring.
- 2. Make sure that your message is being delivered by a source that the audience finds credible.** The messenger is often as important (or sometimes more important) than the message itself. For example, if you are trying to reach the public through the press, use a newspaper that is widely read and well respected. If you are targeting parents, try to reach them through parent organizations or other parents.
- 3. Create a message that the audience will understand.** Use the “language” of the target group. Avoid technical terms or jargon. If your message presentation uses charts, keep them clear, simple and easy to understand. Use words or phrases that have positive images, rather than terms that may have negative connotations. For example, it is sometimes better to say “child spacing” rather than “birth control” or “family planning.”

B. Identifying Specific Audiences

You may want to use technical information or research data in your message. Messages to a variety of groups such as decision makers, the media, the public, and advocacy organizations, often contain simplified information from technical research and data. Let’s explore how research can be tailored to the major policy-related audiences. We will build upon the Kenya family planning example from Module 2 as a case study for this section. For each constituency, we will examine the message content and format which will be most effective.

Audience 1: Decision Makers and “Influentials”

A significant share, if not all, of your advocacy will likely focus on reaching decision makers and the people who influence them. This audience might include government officials, ministry leaders or organizational executives depending on the program or policy you are attempting to introduce or change.

Decision Makers and “Influentials”

(continued)

Suggested Message Content

Messages to decision makers should be short, concise, and persuasive. Even if the decision maker is not a politician, it can be beneficial to communicate (sometimes subtly) how your proposal enhances his or her political or social standing. Economic arguments such as the potential budgetary savings or benefits are always good to include when possible. Policy makers will also want to know what action you would like them to take and who else supports your proposal.

Suggested Message Formats

- ◆ formal or informal face-to-face meetings
- ◆ informal conversations at social, religious, political, or business gatherings
- ◆ letters: personal, organizational, or coalition
- ◆ briefing meetings
- ◆ program site visits
- ◆ fact sheets
- ◆ pamphlets or brochures
- ◆ graphics or illustrations

continued...

Suggested Message Formats

(continued)

- ◆ short video presentations
- ◆ computer presentations
- ◆ interactive computer modeling programs
- ◆ overhead or slide presentations
- ◆ newspaper articles or advertisements
- ◆ broadcast commentary or coverage

Example

Message to Decision Makers

Kenya’s family planning program has reached a plateau. More money invested in the current program will not noticeably reduce growth rates as long as the demand for family planning among men remains low. The key to increasing the demand for family planning is to decrease the number of children that men want their wives to have through persuasive family education programs. **A small investment in education programs for men, will yield a large return.** We would like to request a meeting with you to further discuss this issue.

Sharing experiences with the group

- ② Which of the elements of message content does the above example contain?

(Refer to Elements of Message Content on page 53).

Sample letter to a decision maker

March 28, 1996

Mr. Decision Maker
National Assembly
100 National Square, Room 1111
Capital City

Dear Mr. Maker:

We are writing to you today to express our deep concern and interest in the future of Kenya's family planning program. We would also like to convey our strong support for the Kenya Family Planning Partnership Act currently being considered in the National Assembly.

Kenya's family planning program has reached a plateau. Our extensive research has shown that the current family planning program as it is now will yield few reductions in growth rates because demand for family planning among men remains low. The key to increasing the use of family planning is to decrease the number of children men desire through education programs. **A small investment in these family education programs, will yield a large return for Kenya's future.**

We would like to meet with you, or your representative, at your earliest convenience to further discuss this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Family Planning
President
National Family Planning
Association of Kenya

Audience 2: Advocacy Organizations

While often it is not possible to start new advocacy efforts based on research findings, it is possible to feed new research findings into existing advocacy efforts. Many advocacy organizations have neither the resources nor staff time to do the research necessary to support their propositions and arguments. If advocacy organizations in your area have goals similar to your own, work with these organizations by offering your data and research findings for their use.

Suggested Message Content

Advocacy organizations need specific information that supports their arguments. Research and data are used when facts and figures are presented clearly. Because advocates often insert such facts directly into their materials targeted to decision makers, design the content for a policy audience.

Suggested Message Formats

- ◆ meetings with organization's leaders and staff
- ◆ ready-to-use fact sheets
- ◆ graphics or illustrations
- ◆ short computer-modeling presentations
- ◆ briefing meetings for advocacy organizations

Information and materials that are presented in ready-to-use formats are likely to be used by advocates.

Example

Data/Research for Advocacy

- ◆ Kenyan men's knowledge of contraception.
 - 98% know a modern method
 - 95% know a source to get a modern method
- ◆ Kenyan men's fertility preferences.
 - 26% of Kenyan men want more children
 - 10% are opposed to family planning
- ◆ Kenyan men's use of a contraceptive method.
 - 51% use a contraceptive method
 - 31% use a modern method
- ◆ Gaps in family planning services men use.
 - xx% prefer "male only" clinics

Source: Kenya Demographic and Health Survey

Sharing experiences with the group



Based on your advocacy objective, what data or research could you share with an advocacy organization that is promoting a goal similar to yours? Why?

Audience 3: Broadcast Media and The Press

The media can be effective conveyors of information to all sectors of society. Therefore, the information that the press and broadcast media report and how they treat issues can influence both broad public opinion and the thinking of individual decision makers. Media can include radio, television, newspapers, magazines, trade journals or community newsletters; “media” is any organized system that delivers information to large numbers of people.

Even if your short-term advocacy strategy or country situation prevents your reaching out to the media, you should consider incorporating media outreach into your long term advocacy plans. The media can be a powerful tool for building wide support for your advocacy goals over the long term.

Suggested Message Content

The press generally likes to know how a situation affects individuals and often reports “human interest stories.” That is, they use someone’s experience as an example. The media are also usually interested in new, ground-breaking information or how an issue relates to a current happening.

Suggested Message Formats

- ◆ news release
- ◆ press conference or media event
- ◆ issue briefing for journalists
- ◆ graphics or illustrations
- ◆ fact sheet or back ground sheet
- ◆ media packet/press kit
- ◆ letter to the editor

Example

Human Interest Story*

Nester, a Kenyan farmer in his 30’s, has four children and would like to have another child. His wife, Wangari is happy with four children and after having a very difficult last pregnancy she would like to avoid another, but will ultimately respect her husband’s wishes. Nester and Wangari have not discussed the subject with one another.

The Kenya Men’s Family Education Project recently distributed booklets and ran a series of radio programs on the economic benefits of smaller families. Nester heard the program. “I have always wanted a large family, but I would like to provide adequately for the children I have now.” He is now more interested in discussing the issue with his wife.

*This is a hypothetical account.

Sharing experiences with the group

- ② What formats would be effective in reaching the media in your country?

Hints on Media Relations¹

- ◆ Find out which reporters cover your issues. Develop a good relationship with these reporters by contacting them and sending them information regularly. For example, contact a reporter whenever you are launching a new initiative, issuing a new study, or hosting an important official at your program site. Be sure to know and follow the hierarchy of a media organization.
- ◆ Become familiar with your local and national media offices before you contact them. Know the kind of stories they follow and the type of spokesperson you should send to capture their attention.
- ◆ Always respect journalists' deadlines and time constraints. Show interest in their work.
- ◆ If a reporter or editor is subject to government censorship, respect their limitations and work with them to find a way to tell your story.

¹ Adapted from *After Cairo: A Handbook on Advocacy for Women Leaders*.

- ◆ Prepare several catchy sentences which summarize your message ("sound-bites") that you can use in interviews with reporters.
- ◆ Do not try to answer a question if you do not know the answer. Never bluff. Tell reporters that you will get back to them with the information right away. Always keep your promise to call back with the information.
- ◆ When talking to a reporter be sure to give your key points first, then the background. The interview may not last as long as you expect.

Sample News Release

The Kenya Men's Family Education Project

NEWS RELEASE	March 28, 1996
CONTACT:	Media Officer
For Immediate Release	Tel: 1-234-55-67

New Family Planning Project Reaches Kenyan Men

Nairobi, Kenya – The Kenya Men's Family Education Project issued its first report, titled "Fathers Count: Men's Role in Kenya's Family Planning Progress." The Family Education Project has reached almost half of Kenyan men in the last two years with information about family planning and the benefits of smaller families. The

program is working; men are increasing their demand for contraceptives.

The Family Education project aims to reach Kenyans such as Nester, a Kenyan farmer in his 30's, with four children. Nester would like to have another child, though his wife, Wangari is happy with four children. After having a very difficult last pregnancy Wangari would like to avoid another, but will ultimately respect her husband's wishes. Nester and Wangari have not discussed the subject with one another.

The Kenya Men's Family Education Project recently distributed booklets and ran a series of radio programs on the benefits of smaller families. Nester was one of those who heard the program. "I have always wanted a large family, but I would also like to be able to provide adequately for the children I have now." He is now more interested in discussing the issue with his wife.

"Slowing Kenya's growth is an enormous task, but programs like the Kenya Men's Family Education Project are making a difference," said Mr. Family Planning, President of the Kenya Family Planning Association.

The Kenya Men's Family Education Project is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about family planning.

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Audience 4: General Public

The general public is an increasingly relevant and forceful constituency for policy change. Ultimately, the public is the end-user of programs, therefore, it is useful to direct advocacy messages to citizens. Long-term public education will build a larger constituency for your cause, so try to include public outreach in your long-term advocacy planning.

Suggested Message Content

Messages to the general public should be simple, clear, concise and persuasive, and action-oriented. People often want to know how a program will directly affect or benefit them.

Suggested Message Formats

- ◆ promotional items, e.g., buttons, fans, pens
- ◆ banners
- ◆ presentations at community meetings
- ◆ pamphlets, brochures, fliers
- ◆ newspaper ads or articles
- ◆ fact sheets
- ◆ radio shows
- ◆ television shows or news
- ◆ "community" summary of report

Example

Fathers Count: Men's partnership is the key to slowing Kenya's population growth and ensuring a quality future for our country. The Kenya Men's Partnership Program will give you information you need to make the right decisions for your family. For information, contact the Kenya Men's Partnership Foundation at 1.234.55.67.

Sharing experiences with the group

- ① How important is the general public in relation to the decision-making process you are targeting?
- ② If the public is important, what kinds of actions can they take as individuals?
- ③ How can your message inform and motivate the public to take these actions?

Exercises



What messages would you like to communicate? Choose two of the audiences you identified in Module 4. Then decide:

- A. what action the audience should take;
- B. what your message content will be;
- C. what format(s) you will use to deliver the message;
- D. who or what the message carrier should be;
- E. when and where you might deliver your message.

Use the blank chart on the next page to fill in your answers.

Policy Message: Audience 1

Audience	
Action you want the audience to take	
Message content	
Format(s)	
Messengers	
Time and place for delivery	

Policy Message: Audience 2

Audience	
Action you want the audience to take	
Message content	
Format(s)	
Messengers	
Time and place for delivery	



Review the examples below and complete the final set. Then, present key facts from your research in a persuasive manner.

Persuasive Data Presentation

Non-persuasive

Non-utilization of family planning among males is 49 percent.

Of men who are not using family planning and do not intend to use family planning in the future, 25.7 percent report that they want more children, 10 percent report that they lack knowledge about family planning and 9.8 percent disapprove of family planning.

Only 65.1 percent of men with no education know a source for a modern family planning method and 99.3 percent of men with a secondary education or more know a source for a modern method.

Persuasive

Almost half of all Kenyan men do not currently use family planning.

Almost half of those men who are not using family planning do not because they want more children, don't know about family planning, or don't approve of family planning.
